PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO • PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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WASHINGTON, DC



THE PHILIPPINES

March on May Day for Communist Revolution

We salute the comrades fighting back —

Against racist background checks at DC Metro where they successfully fought for a bus driver who'd been fired after returning to work after a year-long struggle with cancer;

In Haiti, where in the universities they continue the fight against the vicious attacks facing the working class;At CUNY, against warmonger David Petraeus, who was invited to lecture and ultimately convince and recruit working-class students to fight and die for U.S. imperialism. On his first day of work, students chased Petraeus, screaming at him as he walked toward the subway;In Mexico, where teachers once again took to the streets of Oaxaca and Mexico City last summer in a massive months-long strike. In the midst of this sharp struggle, PLP has won fellow workers to the necessity of going beyond reform to revolution;In Newark, where the education struggle has intensified as students, workers and parents took their fight to the streets with two big demonstrations over the past month against the racist cutbacks against mainly black and Latino students.

These fightbacks are the bright spots we look to because here, the Progressive Labor Party is active! Here, workers and youth are being won to the long term and only answer to the attacks of capitalism — communist revolution.

Looking beyond our field of influence, it's been another year of mass upheavals since last May Day, this time in Venezuela and Ukraine, but the politics of those fights are at best dead-end roads and at worst pathways to fascism.

Many workers- and youth involved in mass struggles across the globe are won over to nationalism and even forms of fascism. Others are striving toward a more egalitarian future, but without communist leadership they are limited to the vocabulary and concepts of the ruling class — "freedom," "justice," "dignity." The ruling class speaks of freedom because they need to be free to throw workers out of work and send

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MEXICO

BROOKLYN

OUR FIGHT

✵Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✵Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✵Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✵While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✵Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✵Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✵Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✵Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✵Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✵Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

May Day Means: Challenge Bosses' Nuclear War Plans

We are marching today to honor the great holiday of the international working class: May Day. We are uniting to build a worldwide movement, led by the Progressive Labor Party, to destroy capitalism and erect a communist society run by and for workers. PLP groups in more than twenty countries are dedicated to challenging the rival imperialist powers as they battle for control over the earth's resources — especially oil and gas — and to exploit our class. We workers produce everything of value; the bosses steal the value of our labor for their profits, the lifeblood of capitalism.

Inevitably, the leading imperialists — and especially the rulers of the United States, Russia and China — will settle their intensifying competition in a major war, just as they did in World Wars I and II. They will use the world's workers as cannon fodder to kill the opposing bosses' workers. They desperately need our class to choose one nationalist side over another.

But we have no stake in these devastating fights over profits. We oppose all bosses. We must turn their imperialist wars into a class war for our interests. We need to organize a revolution to bury capitalism once and for all.

U.S. Oligarchs vs. Russian Oligarchs

As of the moment, the leading edge of this inter-imperialist rivalry pits the bosses of ExxonMobil and JPMorgan Chase, represented by warrior-in-chief Barack Obama, against Russian bosses led by Vladimir Putin — dictator against dictator, oligarchs against oligarchs. To counter Putin's goal of an empire built from the former republics of the Soviet Union, Obama is following a potentially catastrophic New Cold War policy endorsed by the most powerful U.S. capitalists. (See box on the old Cold War.)

Obama's New Cold War combines economic pressure (bolstered by growing U.S. energy leverage from recent discoveries of oil and gas) with a sharp reminder of the U.S.'s nuclear superiority and its readiness to use it. For our class, the stakes couldn't be higher. During the first Cold War, U.S. rulers slaughtered three million workers and farmers to contain Soviet (and later Chinese) influence in Vietnam. In standoffs like the Cuban missile crisis, U.S.-Soviet military brinksmanship imperiled the lives of hundreds of millions more.

On April 16, Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) think tank, wrote, "The strategy needed to resist Putin's efforts to expand Russia's influence beyond its borders — and to induce change within them — resembles nothing so much as the 'containment' doctrine that guided Western policy for the four decades of the Cold War" (CFR website). The CFR was founded by heavyweights of U.S. finance and industry: JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, ExxonMobil and Chevron. David Rockefeller, longtime leader of the finance capital wing of the U.S. ruling class, is honorary chairman.

For these arch-imperialists' benefit, Haass asked Obama to impose "stronger sanctions" targeting Russian financial institutions, and to weaken Russia's energy stranglehold on Ukraine and much of Western Europe" by exporting U.S. oil and gas. He also ominously demanded that Obama "increase...America's presence in select NATO countries." (See box on NATO on page 4.)

The next day, the CFR clarified Haass's deadly message with an article, "NATO After Crimea," by Pentagon advisor and liberal Brookings Institution fellow Michael O'Hanlon. It called for 3,000 to 7,000 GIs to be stationed in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to create "a trip wire along the border with Russia." Under official NATO doctrine, the term "trip wire" has nuclear significance. Translation: If Soviet troops crossed NATO borders, U.S. rulers would retaliate with atomic bombs on Russian cities.

Only U.S. Rulers Used A-Bomb

The "trip wire" scenario relies on the Big Lie that paints conventionally armed Russian invaders as the nuclear initiators. "You made us do it," the U.S. will retort. But "trip wire" is actually a euphemism for Washington's dreaded first-strike stance — the use of nuclear weapons to destroy the enemy's capacity to respond. (U.S. bosses are the only ones ever to use the atomic bomb.) The "trip wire" strategy ruled NATO planning from 1957 to 1968, when the U.S.-dominated alliance had more bombs than the Soviet bloc but fewer troops and tanks near likely battle zones. U.S. warlords perceive a similar imbalance today. So they are dusting off NATO document MC 14/2.

The document's history is outlined in a 1975 Defense Department report to Congress: "The so-called 'trip-wire' response [was] stated in Military Committee Document 14/2 during the period of unquestioned United States nuclear superiority. MC14/2 emphasized deterrence through the threat of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons in lieu of large conventional [U.S.-led] forces."

The MC 14/2's original trip-wire ultimatum, now being revived by Obama and the imperialist liberal media, was laid out as follows:

> *The principal elements of the deterrent are adequate nuclear and other ready forces and the manifest determination to retaliate against any aggressor with all the forces at our disposal, including nuclear weapons, which the defense of NATO would require.*

U.S. Sends Ground Troops

On April 16, just before Haass and O'Hanlon made their pitches for nuclear gunboat diplomacy, the Washington Post, an outlet closely linked to war-bent U.S. liberal bosses, printed an Op Ed article by imperialist flunky James Jeffrey. Jeffrey served MobilExxon as U.S. ambassador to Iraq from 2010 to 2012 and then was hired by the energy company directly. He has strong-armed Exxon's stated right to pump oil simultaneously from bitterly conflicted regions of the country, even though these actions destabilize the fragile nation (Reuters, 2/8/13). In the Post piece, Jeffrey welcomed a renewed "trip wire" prospect of facing down Russia with nuclear threats — and even retaking territory Putin has seized. He wrote:

> *Examples of effective ground force "tripwires" date to the U.S. brigade in Berlin during the Cold War. The best way to send Putin a tough message and possibly deflect a Russian campaign against more vulnerable NATO states is to back up our commitment to the sanctity of NATO territory with ground troops, the only military deployment that can make such commitments unequivocal.*
>
> *To its credit, the administration has dispatched fighter aircraft to Poland and the Baltic states to reinforce NATO fighter patrols and exercises. But these deployments, as with ships temporarily in the Black Sea, have*

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Cold War Was Pretty Hot

The old Cold War began in 1946, immediately following World War II, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union had been allies. U.S. rulers realized that the then-socialist Soviet Union, led by the Bolshevik Party, wasn't merely the main force that defeated Hitler's Nazi Germany. The USSR also inspired tens of millions of workers in Asia, Africa and Latin America to try to free themselves from the colonial imperialists of the U.S., Britain and France. By 1949, the Chinese Communist Party had led a revolution and emancipated hundreds of millions of workers and peasants.

U.S. rulers turned to a policy of "containment" to hem in the Soviet Union and smash anti-colonial liberation movements backed by the Soviets. Thus emerged the Cold War. It was "cold" in the sense that neither side seemed ready to employ the newly destructive atomic bomb to destroy one another, despite the willingness of the U.S. ruling class to use it to obliterate the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, when it alone had the bomb, and murder a quarter-million workers in 1945.

Even so, the Cold War was never a peaceful time. Innumerable "small" wars erupted. In 1950, U.S. rulers fought the Soviet Union and China in the three-year Korean War. U.S. bosses invaded or helped overthrow governments in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Chile, among many others. But a turning point came in Vietnam, when U.S. forces were driven out in defeat.

By the late 1960s, the Soviet Union had reverted to full-blown capitalism. The seeds of this regression were contained in the retention of features of the profit system, especially a wage system that created tiers of privilege in the working class. Eventually, a new class system developed in the USSR. Support for anti-colonial national liberation movements degenerated into an imperialist operation for Soviet expansionism. From that point on, the Cold War became an imperialist rivalry between the rulers of the U.S. and the USSR. It ended in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, due mainly to internal weaknesses.

Worker-Student Alliance Defies Racist Police State

CHICAGO, April 21 — Using fascist police-state tactics, president Wayne Watson is attempting to stifle the growing outrage of students and faculty at Chicago State University (CSU). As a multiracial worker-student alliance, we are learning to fight back. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) strives to turn this struggle into a school for communism. Several students expressed interest in boarding the May Day bus to Brooklyn, NY.

Racist Administration

The struggle against Watson and interim provost Angela Henderson took a qualitative leap forward with the arrest of Willie Preston on March 7. After being expelled for speaking against the racist administration, he returned to campus to speak at the public Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting. He now faces charges of trespassing and violating an order of protection. Racist Henderson acquired an order of protection by referring to Willie as a domestic terrorist and invoking the racist stereotype of the violent black man.



Willie became Watson's enemy because he, along with his fellow students and faculty, is exposing the misuse of student activity fees, the corruption of the Student Government Association (SGA) elections, the racist treatment of students at the bookstore, and the need to restore childcare on campus. These attacks are happening on campuses across the U.S. and are symptomatic of the bosses' plan for our class in time of global crisis: more cutbacks, war, and use of the state to suppress working-class rebellions.

It's Not Just the BOT; It's Capitalism

So spring break started with students and faculty raising bail money and phoning the campus police station in support of Willie. (Illinois State Police are the CSU campus security.) We went to Willie's first court appearance. At a nearby restaurant, a committee was organized to continue the fight against Watson's attacks. Faculty members added their grievances, which include Watson's attempts to squelch the dissident CSU Faculty Voice blog, hiring of cronies and paying them exorbitant salaries. PLP pointed out the racist nature of Watson's attacks. Although black himself, he and the mostly black BOT willingly carry out the racist policies of Governor Quinn and the state legislature. Mass imprisonment of black men is the New Jim Crow and Watson, Henderson, and the BOT are breeding that same racism in CSU.

PLP exposed the bosses as exploiters of all workers, making super-profits from black, Latino, and immigrant workers. The bosses divide the working class with racism to stop us from uniting, and at CSU, it's not any different. Capitalism rewards Watson and Henderson for trying to control and terrorize working-class students. This is a sign of a system fearful of the potential power of multiracial unity. We must wage a struggle to turn this fightback at CSU into a revolutionary movement to destroy capitalism and to replace it with communism, a society without racism, sexism, and other forms of inequality.

Biggest Threat to Bosses: Multiracial Unity

The anticommunist administration revoked PLP's reservation for a "Repression at CSU" forum on April 9, locking the auditorium, and posting a police guard. More than 80 people attended the forum, which somehow ended up sharing space in a nearby lecture hall with a history class, which then joined us. CHALLENGE was distributed widely. Students described how the SGA kept those who fought back off the ballot. Willie shared his struggle via Skype. An anonymous statement was read from a student who had been physically threatened for speaking out.

The SGA president, a Watson clone, appealed to racism saying: "the organizers of this forum don't look like you." This mimics Watson's attempts to characterize the current fightback as being fomented by "white communist professors." These lies expose Watson's and the BOT's fear of the multiracial unity of the organizing committee, the worker-student alliance, and the unity of the communist organization PLP with students and faculty. Two students sought out PLP after the forum to sign up for May Day.

Sexist Shutdown of Daycare

On April 15, our committee joined a campus rally to demand "Daycare Now" at CSU. In 2009, the campus daycare program was closed. Five years later and there is still no childcare! It's worth noting the demographics of CSU. Of its nearly 4,400 students, 72 percent are women, 99 percent apply for need-based financial aid, 86 percent are black, 6 percent are Latino, and 69 percent are single parents. The average age of students is 31. So when the University shuts down daycare, it is attacking mostly black women workers.

The morning of the rally, the administration announced a new daycare center is being "planned" for June of 2016. Despite being prevented by the cops from using a bullhorn, students testified loudly how the bloated administration budgets and salaries could pay for daycare now. Obviously childcare for these working-class students' children is not in the interest of the administration!

Our struggle at CSU demonstrates the use of the bosses' police and legal system to suppress any antiracist and antisexist fightback. The university is a locus of ruling-class ideologies and attacks. But it is also a site of fightback and potential for a communist base. Several students signed up to learn about PLP and the May Day bus to Brooklyn. We have been meeting with and recruiting these students to May Day, with some success. One student is trying to recruit classmates. We are now hoping to march as a CSU contingent in Brooklyn!✪

A Small Group Can Stir Up a Large Protest

TEXAS, April 22 — Every year one city hosts a large Cesar Chavez march. Chavez was a reformist who led a very large movement for the rights of migrant laborers in the United Farmworkers Union in the 1960s-70s. And during an election season like this year's, the march swells with liberal misleaders. This year PL members in our area made a plan to coordinate several activities in order to counter the Chavez Committee's "vote-for-lesser-of-two-evils" line.

We planned to bring a large base along with a leaflet and bullhorn in order to project a clear outlook of multiracial unity against capitalism and against voting for the bosses. In the past we executed a similar plan and were able to win hundreds of students and workers away from the march organizer's meaningless "Si se puede" ("yes, we can!") chant toward more militants chants like, "Obreros, unidos, jamás serán vencidos" ("The workers united, will never be defeated.") As this year's march date grew closer, however, our plan unraveled. We hadn't written the leaflet and we had not sufficiently won our friends to attend the march.

Instead of feeling down, we regrouped. We printed sheets with militant working-class and anti-capitalist chants and brought a bullhorn, something we have never brought to the Chavez march.

As the march began, we chanted, "Up, Up with Education, Down, Down with Deportations." "Abajo Con Banderas, Afuera Con Fronteras." ("Down With the Flag, Out with Borders!") "When workers and students are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!"

At first, our friends and the crowd around us were hesitant to join in. But the few PL'ers were persistent. We continued chanting and pointed out the limits of the march organizers' chants.

As we entered downtown, our bullhorn rang loud and hundreds began to join in. At one point the march organizers tried to trick one member away from us and into the front of the march by telling him what a good leader he was. Their real intention was to steal away his powerful voice from leading the working class in militant anti-capitalist chants. We told the march organizer to get lost and we continued pressing forward.

By the end of the march we had influenced hundreds of students and workers. Students who attended with us and were initially hesitant ended up being some of the most active participants. As the march ended, several of us went for coffee. We had a good conversation stemming from the events of the day — ranging from racism and slavery to the politics of recent movies. We plan to continue organizing with these students and building toward May Day! With a revolutionary line and militancy, we can eventually influence millions.✪

Harlem: Students March vs. Columbia U.'s Racist Expansion

NEW YORK CITY, April 11 — Twenty-five Columbia University students met up with fighters from Harlem'S St. Mary's Church to picket the University's fake employment office near 125 St. Loud chants rang out and speeches were made by students and community residents. Then we marched to the church a few blocks away and ate a delicious supper. More discussion ensued, and students were transfixed by a superstorm Sandy survivor who, a year and a half later, is still living in a shelter, without adequate financial support. Capitalism and its racist state apparatus can and will never serve the needs of workers!

Columbia's 17-acre expansion into Manhattanville, the western edge of Harlem, is well underway but will not be completed until 2030. It is making unemployment and affordable housing shortages worse. Columbia itself estimates that 3,300 Harlem residents will be displaced by gentrification in the area surrounding the expansion. They talk about building affordable housing, but "affordable" is based on median income in the whole metropolitan area and has nothing to do with local incomes.

Columbia says 6,900 new jobs will be created, but only 1,500 of those will not require an advanced degree. No sign of apprenticeship programs promised in the Community Benefits Agreement has been seen. As of 2009, Columbia had only 213 employees who lived above 125th St. or in public housing. The so-called "employment" office on Broadway south of 125th St. has not actually offered jobs or job training to local residents.

Manhattanville is a primarily poor black and Latino community, with youth unemployment about 50 percent, rising rents, and poor schools and health care. Columbia's disregard for the people of this neighborhood is blatantly racist. It is totally in line with Columbia's mission of training the ruling class of tomorrow and inculcating today's students with the certainty of their superiority. In 1968, a mass movement of students and local residents defeated Columbia's plan to build a gym in a park in Harlem, to the exclusion of local residents.

For the past year students have been researching the history of Columbia's treachery in the neighborhood. They have held two well-attended campus forums about gentrification, in which community groups also participated. Now they are deciding how to proceed on a campaign of action and education next school year, along with their new community allies.

Other student groups, involved in campus-worker solidarity, climate change, and against Columbia's investment in prison corporations, to name a few, are also participating. The upsurge in campus activism makes it possible to once again build a worker-student-community alliance and engage in anti-racist struggle against this elitist, monolithic university.

More students are also reading CHALLENGE. Several are coming to May Day; many are open to considering how capitalism exploits and abuses all workers, from white collar to blue, and how an alliance between them is necessary to fight for change, from reforms to the ultimate overthrow of capitalism.✪

Haiti: As Fascism Deepens, PL'ers Advance Communist Outlook

PORT-AU-PRINCE, April 14 — The human tragedy of the global economic crisis continues to smash workers' daily lives here, but PLP communists and the working masses are building strength by resisting the regime's moves towards more fascist social control, with the open agreement of the U.S. Embassy. We need revolutionary imagination to arrive at the only worthwhile response: overthrow capitalism and take power for the workers.

Meanwhile, endemic joblessness is killing slowly while cholera kills quickly; homelessness, malnutrition, lack of clean water, health care, electricity, transport, education, and drought continue to worsen.

Fascism intensifies inside the gangster government, installing ex-military figures like Himler Rébu in ministerial posts. There are increasing crackdowns on the media and the right to demonstrate in the streets and outlawing any sort of legal opposition. This includes several assassinations of Pres. Martelly opponents: the murder of two prominent human rights workers, and the killing of Fitzgerald, a leader of the reform party Lavalas.

Police gunfire wounded three students inside the Faculty of Ethnology (a long-time center of student resistance), during mass protests against the arrest of the opposition lawyer André Michel. The government has threatened media like Radio Kiskeya and Radio Zénith if they criticize those in power.

Elsewhere, gangs violently harass street merchants and market women (those getting by without wages for work). Landlords' vigilantes attack peasants in many areas. And the youth are the favorite targets of the gangster rulers.

Parliamentary 'National Dialogue' Supplements Fascist Crackdown

Martelly is trying to co-opt any opposition in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies with a "National Dialogue" of all political parties. One result is the newly voted anti-terrorism law, which defines any protester in the streets as a terrorist, justifying mass arrests and heavy sentences in case of a mass uprising. This law shows how capitalist-elected parliaments participate fully in developing fascism (like the U.S. Congress and Homeland Security).

Lavalas, the semi-banned party of the celebrity populist Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was about to join this Dialogue but pulled out before signing. Jean-Charles Moïse, an Aristide rival inside Lavalas and leader of its fake left wing, was expelled from Lavalas for disobeying the party directive not to demonstrate outside the U.S. Embassy. Thus Lavalas too participates in the advance of fascism.

'Enrichissez-Vous!' Drugs, Arms Good for Business

Governing is good business for those who accumulate wealth directly from their government posts. Politicians seize land for urban renewal or reconstruction while themselves being part-owners of the finance or construction companies who get the government contracts. One farcical example: the electricity promised for workers' districts yielded only a few solar-powered street-lights, illuminating the rutted streets while the houses themselves remained in darkness. The Prime Minister holds shares in the electric company selling such "services" to the state.



Aba Okipasyon = Down with Occupation

In the South, several land parcels which are used as small airports by drug-traffickers as transshipment points between South America and the U.S., have been seized by the State, only so the politicians themselves can benefit more directly from the drug trade. And the Prime Minister has been implicated in the illegal arms traffic entering Haiti from Israeli manufacturers, often destined for use by politicians at election time to intimidate their rivals' voters.

The Communist Imagination



The step-up of fascist violence makes fightback more difficult. Public demonstrations have slowed since the big December garment-workers' protests for unionization — tough when rebel workers are so easy to fire.

PLP is always among the masses at these events, determinedly fighting for our communist outlook. Whether youth study groups, literacy classes using communist ideas as texts, a community organizing group, private meetings with workers and professionals (mostly unemployed or unpaid for work performed), or just sitting under a tree in the public park, comrades in Haiti are pursuing our vision. We will overturn this profit-driven heartless world.

International Dimension

With sharpening imperialist conflicts among Russian, U.S. and Chinese bosses, communists are examining Haiti's position relative to these great powers. Extreme joblessness turns Haiti into a "reserve army of the unemployed," available to supply low-wage workers, and thus lower all workers' wages throughout the region. Thousands of Haiti's workers get easy entry into Brazil, for example, for poorly paid construction work, and the bosses of both countries profit.

Brazil, the region's rising "sub-imperialist" with an ambivalent relation to the U.S., is the largest supplier of troops for the UN's military here, where they perfect their dirty techniques of repression for use at home (e.g., in "cleaning up" working-class slums for the World Cup and Olympic games).

Another "sub-imperialist" is Venezuela, which gives cheap oil to Haiti. Henrique Capriles, the Venezuelan millionaire prominent in the opposition to the Chavista regime, is also donating "gifts" such as soccer stadiums to Haiti.

Given Haiti's relationships to inter-imperialist rivalry, if war erupts, misery and fascism in Haiti will only intensify, especially if the U.S. needs Haiti in an inter-imperialist war, as they did against Germany in World War I when the Marines invaded Haiti and occupied it until 1934. Would Haiti be caught between the U.S. on the one hand and Brazil and Venezuela on the other?

But we are clear here that workers must not take a side in this fight between exploiters, but unite for revolution under the red flag of the international PLP.✪

Bosses' Nuclear War Plans

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inherent weaknesses as political signals. They cannot hold terrain — the ultimate arbiter of any military calculus — and can be easily withdrawn if trouble brews. Troops, even limited in number, send a much more powerful message. More difficult to rapidly withdraw, once deployed, they can make the point that the United States is serious about defending NATO's eastern borders.

The big capitalists welcome Barack Obama's recent efforts in the Ukraine crisis, as evidenced by the bosses' top liberal mouthpiece: "Even as the crisis in Ukraine continues to defy easy resolution, President Obama and his national security team are looking beyond the immediate conflict to forge a new long-term approach to Russia that applies an updated version of the Cold War strategy of containment" (New York Times, 4/20/14). A half century ago, U.S. capitalists' "containment" policy explicitly threatened nuclear war. It does so again today.

The U.S. rulers' problem is that they aren't close to the military mobilization they need for a decisive confrontation of rivals Russia and China. The U.S. working class stands opposed to war, especially after Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. workers are beset by mass racist unemployment, inadequate and costly healthcare, racist attacks by the bosses' cops, increasing poverty, and mass racist incarceration, especially of black and Latino workers and youth. Putin and his capitalist cronies face a similar obstacle, with Russian workers increasingly disenchanted as the country's economy gets squeezed in the fight over Ukraine.

Destroying capitalism, the system that causes these problems, is the only answer for workers in the U.S., Russia and worldwide. Achieving that goal means building a revolutionary party to lead and guide the working class with communist ideas. That's what the Progressive Labor Party is all about. Join PLP and fight to bury the bosses and their racist, sexist, war-driven system.✪

NATO: U.S. Rulers' Weapon of War

NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was built by the U.S. after World War II to lead Western Europe's capitalist countries at the outset of the Cold War. Its goal was to counter the then-socialist Soviet Union and its communist ideas, which threatened the U.S. bosses' profit system. U.S. imperialists built a military force in Germany, France, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy, all close to or bordering the North Atlantic. The organization used anti-communism to stir up fears of Soviet tanks and troops overwhelming Western Europe, a specter that had no basis in reality.

As it developed, NATO became a military machine to be used anywhere U.S. rulers needed to protect profits, to control supplies of oil and gas, and to take down any government that refused to bend to their will. Over time the boundaries of the Atlantic Ocean somehow kept moving east — to Central and Eastern Europe, to Yugoslavia, to Iraq and throughout the Middle East, even to Afghanistan and South Asia, thousands of miles from the Atlantic.

But once socialism in the Soviet Union and adjacent Eastern European countries fell, "communism" was no longer the enemy. In their place, the U.S. rulers and their media created high-pitched fear around the likes of Osama bin Laden. "Terrorists," of course, exist all around the planet. The entire world has become fair game for the U.S. ruling class, which uses NATO to mobilize all the capitalists it can line up on its side. When the U.S. can't recruit any allies, it simply goes it alone — as it did against Saddam Hussein, in a move to capture the oil riches ExxonMobil coveted.

Hitler once proclaimed, "Germany uber alles" ("Germany over all"). Now it's the U.S. uber alles, using NATO as its hammer, ready to slaughter any number of workers to achieve its aims.

May Day: Celebrate Workers' Power

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us off to war. They speak of justice because their courts operate according to laws written to protect the rich, laws that set racist killer cops free time and again. For the working class freedom and justice take on another meaning:

Freedom to attend schools where students develop lifelong interests and abilities, where workers aren't separated by imaginary borders and the bosses' racism.

Justice for the Davis and Livingston families whose sister and daughter were taken from them by racist police murder.

Dignity? There is nothing dignified about a ruling class who has plunged the globe into war, world war, environmental collapse, whose culture reeks of sexism and racism, who squander the one most precious thing — human potential — with a recklessness that is astonishing even to the most cleareyed and determined communists among us. No, if there is any repository of dignity left in this world it resides deep in the working class, among the poor, between two who share when there is not enough to feed one, between a teacher who stays late at work helping a teenager learn to read and to question and the youngster who is brave enough to confront and correct the damage the bosses' schools have done.

We need that teacher and that student to understand that capitalism kills every form of freedom, justice and dignity they might want to build a life around. These ideals can only be fulfilled under communism.

When I was a teenager, I knew something was wrong with the world, I just couldn't put my finger on the cause and unfortunately I had a deep sense that there was nothing I could do about it. My friends and I faced the same issues many of my students face today: parents who worked their asses off at dead-end jobs to keep food in the fridge;, prison-like conditions in our school, where assuming the position was the only thing we were guaranteed to have learned upon graduating; and the incorrect idea that if we just worked hard enough we could make it…but we knew that wasn't true. We knew that wasn't true because no one worked harder than our mothers and they certainly didn't "make it."

In 11th grade, I met PLP and things began to make sense. I realized that capitalism couldn't be fixed because it wasn't broken. It works for whom it was made to work for, the bosses. Most important, I learned and finally understood that there was an alternative to capitalism. And though it's a long-term struggle, communism is the only system that can serve the working class. I was given an opportunity to fight for that world, and that's what I want to offer to you today.



One International Working Class, One World, One Party

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens. Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class. Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society. Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party. Only communism means dignity for the workers and not a return to the same old conditions under a new set of rulers. Join us!

Progressive Labor Party fights directly for communism because history teaches us that socialism leads back to capitalism, that reform does not lead to revolution. We know that cutting deals with the bosses, voting for the "lesser evil," settling for crumbs when we bake the bread, settling for homelessness when we build the homes, leads back to capitalism.

To get to communism, we need to do more than to know the bosses' fatal weaknesses; we need to act on them! We must seize the time, every day. Each flaw — their splits, their need for racism, their need for war, their economic collapse — each one is a fracture that presents itself to us to enter, expose, widen, and ultimately smash! We have a world to win and nothing to lose but our chains!

Communism will be won, comrades. It will be won because the working class will always fight back for a more egalitarian world. Bitter anger against the ruling classes and their corrupt political bosses, bitter anger at the ever-diminishing opportunities for a decent life under their system will continue to bubble up. The job is ours alone; we must earn the right to provide leadership in these mass struggles, to spread the message that only one path leads to the fulfillment of the goals for which so many of our class brothers and sisters continue to lay their lives on the line for real freedom, real justice, and real dignity — communism.

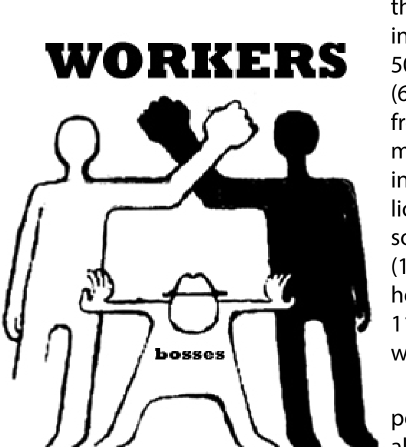
Today's struggles where the Party is active and winning our class to the fight for communism are the seed bed for tomorrow's participation in large-scale mass struggles, and our aim will be the same. Only communism means emancipation for the workers. Our activity today among the hundreds and the thousands is our training to lead the millions tomorrow. Make no mistake: our goal is to lead millions, and history says we can do it. We are proud of our communist past — it strengthens us. No matter the twists and turns, the setbacks and advances ahead. Mass struggle will continue to be sparked, the Party will continue to win new members to the fight for communism, and when the two come together — when PLP can shape mass struggle into class struggle for communism — the bosses are doomed. They are doomed! May Day is our annual re-commitment to and celebration of this future doom of the bosses and their system. What a great day! Fight for communism!✪

France: Socialists Suck Up to Bosses

PARIS, April 18 — France is a country in which the Socialist government is playing its classic pro-boss role by helping them run roughshod over the working class. The Socialists are shackled to the capitalist class and its requirements. The finance capitalists want French president François Hollande to use ex-president Sarkozy's shock-and-awe tactics to reinforce French capitalism against its imperialist rivals.

This includes by-passing Parliament with executive orders to slash pensions, government-financed health care, and welfare, as well as eliminating job protection for government workers and what remains of the 35-hour work-week.

The new french Prime Minister Manuel Valls kowtowed to the bosses, with his austerity plan: By 2017, the Socialists intend to slash 50 billion euros (69 billion USD$) from the government budget, including 21 billion euros from social security (10 billion from health care and 11 billion from welfare).



Retirement pensions, family allowances and housing benefits will all be cut in real terms, with no cost-of-living increase until October 2015, at least. Retirees will lose over 3 billion euros (4.1 billion USD$). Wages for five million government workers — without a pay increase since 2010 — will be slashed in real terms by continuing the wage freeze.

Meanwhile, unemployment, including part-timers who want to work full time, rose to 5,611,700 people — France has one-sixth the population of the U.S. — or 19.8 percent. Joblessness continues to climb, despite François Hollande's iron-clad promise that he would "reverse the unemployment curve by the end of 2013." Inevitably, there will be more savage attacks on the working class to meet the capitalists' target of reducing the government budget deficit by 3 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

Seven rival trade union confederations have called for a day of protest on May 15. The "elastic" call preserves a façade of unity by allowing each organization to decide whether to strike, hold a work stoppage or just hold a rally. The wimpy demands and action program made it possible for even the most reactionary union confederations to support this "protest."

While workers see their wages, pensions and health care cut, the Socialists are giving the capitalists 42 billion euros (58 billion USD$) a year in presents — 30 billion euros in lower employer social security contributions under the "responsibility pact" and 12 billion euros in lower corporate taxes.

Imperial Tobacco is laying off nearly one-third of its 1,150 workers in France. "Once again, the fat cats win out; we're fed up," said Christelle Notebaert, who works at the Carquefou factory. "We're just numbers, we get no consideration…" Union steward Michel Laboureur said, "Over five years, they paid out 2.6 billion euros [3.6 billion USD$] to…shareholders. You can believe me, this factory is profitable."

Imperial Tobacco plans to hire 130 workers in Poland, where it is shifting part of the Seita factory production (a subsidiary of Imperial Tobacco.) In 2011, the average gross wage in Poland was barely one-fourth of that in France.

Pascal Lamy, former World Trade Organization chief, revealed the bosses' plan on unemployment: "It is necessary to introduce more flexibility [i.e., make it easier to lay off workers], and jobs that are not necessarily paid at the minimum wage." In other words, the French bosses want to introduce German-style "mini-jobs," which have created a pool of four million precariously underpaid workers for the German bosses to exploit.

The fascist National Front (FN) is saying it would pull France out of the European Union, which they blame for the disastrous austerity policies. "We call for a radical change in economic policy by ending the euro…and true economic patriotism," the FN proclaimed on Feb. 28, with an eye to winning workers' votes in the May 24 European Union parliamentary elections.

But the problem is not the bosses' European Union — it is the bosses themselves. The only solution is for workers to build a revolutionary communist party and eliminate the bosses through communist revolution, and create a society run by and for workers.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

GI Rebellions Turned Guns Around in Vietnam War

Eleven people — teachers, a nurse, two EMT workers, and a professional actress — watched, discussed, and were motivated by "Sir! No Sir!", the terrific film about how soldiers organized against the Vietnam War. This was an unprecedented period of GI resistance and rebellion, a time when the U.S. generals could no longer count on soldiers to fight their imperialist war.

All of us were inspired by the brave acts of rebellion, including the Presidio Mutiny in which 27 military prisoners in the San Francisco stockade held a sit-down protest over prison conditions. The soldiers were sentenced up to 16 years in prison. Other soldiers announced their refusal to serve in Vietnam and were also sent to prison. Entire units in Vietnam refused to fight.

The film showed how rebellious soldiers put out underground newspapers and established antiwar coffeehouses, which became centers of antiwar organizing. Entertainers like Pete Seeger, Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, Country Joe McDonald and others performed free antiwar shows to tens of thousands of enthusiastic soldiers and sailors.

Since the history is kept hidden from most people, here are some of the facts:

Between July 1, 1966 and December 31, 1973, there were 503,926 "incidents of desertion," (U.S. Department of Defense).

A thousand Vietnam veterans, some in wheelchairs and on crutches, marched in Washington, DC in 1971 against the war. Many threw their purple heart medals and bronze stars at the Capitol building. Hundreds spoke at campus forums and rallies, countering the lie that soldiers supported the war. In fact, a 1975 survey revealed that 75 percent of veterans opposed the war.

Sailors sabotaged the engines of ships destined for Vietnam. Antiwar sailors on three huge aircraft carriers — the USS Constellation, the USS Coral Sea, and the USS Kitty Hawk — formed an organization called SOS (Stop Our Ships/Support Our Sailors). Thousands of crew members signed antiwar petitions, published antiwar newspapers and supported crew members who refused service.

There were 551 reported incidents of "fraggings" — grenade attacks by soldiers on their officers. This number didn't include rifle attacks on unpopular officers.

We then discussed the contradiction facing military planners: a volunteer army tends to have more motivated and gung-ho soldiers, but there aren't enough to fight a major imperialist war. A draft gives them the numbers bosses need, but at the risk of having many more disgruntled and rebellious soldiers and sailors. "Sir! No Sir!" shows it's possible to win large numbers of soldiers to rebel against fighting imperialist wars.

People often ask how it's possible to have a revolution in a country where a powerful military and police force exist to suppress it. "Sir! No Sir!" shows that soldiers can and will reject the roles that have been assigned to them, and they can turn the guns around and fight for what's in their class interests.

We invited our friends to PLP's May Day celebration.

A reader

Minimum Wage and Maximum Exploitation

My son is an organizer for a major union out here in Western Pennsylvania. Currently, he's very involved in the "Fight For Fifteen" campaign, which is a reform struggle to win a raise in the minimum wage to $15/an/hour for fast food workers and others. I've discussed this question with my son and others.

It appears that many workers support this raise, which itself is barely enough to survive on. I think we should be involved in this struggle, while putting forth our communist analysis. I think it's clear that raising the minimum wage will do next to nothing to eradicate wage slavery and we must explain this to fellow workers.

I would use this analogy. Suppose a plantation owner in the south reduced the hours slaves were forced to work from 14 to 12. Would this mean the slave system would become more humane? I think not. Would the lives of the slave have improved due to this? Hardly at all. Some may think this analogy doesn't hold water, but I think it contains a kernel of truth.

Then there is the question of the cost of living, which will inevitably rise alongside the minimum-wage increase, negating the raise for the low-paid workers. In fact, due to inflation the current minimum wage is actually worth less than 50 years ago.

As we know, it took a bloody Civil War to overturn the slave system and it will take a communist revolution to uproot capitalism and wage slavery, the only real solution for very exploited low-wage workers, as well as for all workers. I would be interested in hearing other views on the minimum-wage question.

Red Coal

Expose Nazi Lies about Katyn Massacre

April 13 is Katyn Memorial Day. This is the day that Polish nationalists and anticommunists commemorate the alleged murder of 22,000 Polish prisoners of war by the Soviets and Stalin in1940. Problem is that it did not happen!

This is an anticommunist lie. It was invented by the Nazis in 1943, and taken up by all the capitalist powers during the Cold War. In 1990-1992, two fanatic anticommunists, Gorbachev and Yeltsin "admitted" Soviet guilt. I myself, a researcher, believed it for a few years. Then, for a longer time, I was agnostic, believing that we just can't know; there's too much conflicting evidence.

But now we know this story simply cannot possibly be true. I published the reasons why in the journal Socialism and Democracy last August in the article titled, "The 'Official' Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven? Discoveries at a German Mass Murder Site in Ukraine." (See *http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/furr_katyn_preprint_0813.pdf* for a copy.)

It wasn't me who made the discoveries that utterly disprove the Katyn story. Polish and Ukrainian archeologists did that. They found things they never expected to find, and certainly hoped no one would ever find. And now they are keeping quiet about it. Yes, the Poles, the Ukrainians, and the Russians too, are keeping this secret. This — the biggest World War II-related discovery of the past several years — is simply hushed up. It is a real "conspiracy of silence."

Katyn Memorial Day, April 13, is a good day to tell the world: "Stalin Is Innocent! The Soviets Are Not Guilty of Killing 22,000 Polish Prisoners of War!" This isn't going to stop the anticommunists. Of course not!

Since when have anticommunists cared about the truth and evidence? Capitalist Poland has spent at least $500 million on hundreds of memorials all over Poland, and three of them in Russia. They aren't going to allow a little thing like historical truth spoil their wonderful anticommunist orgy!

So we should do our best to spoil it for them. Today is a good day to tell the world: "The 'Katyn Massacre' Is An Anticommunist Fraud!" Spread the word!

Soviet History Researcher

MAY DAY 2013



LOS ANGELES   OAKLAND

Cesar Chavez, Capitalist Agent

LOS ANGELES — The new film *Cesar Chavez* is a distorted testament to one of the best friends the agribusiness bosses ever had. Like virtually all movies made under capitalism about class struggle, the movie mangles history. It celebrates the life of a self-serving individual whose legend was created by the ruling class he served. It mostly overlooks the collective contributions of thousands of honest and courageous farmworkers in the militant labor reform fights in California and Texas in the 1960s and '70s. And it is a reminder that communists have an obligation to the working class to call out sellout misleaders like Chavez!

Almost a dozen workers from my clinic went to see a prescreening of the film. The event was sponsored by the organization we work for, a "not-for-profit" that collects huge revenues from sales of pharmaceuticals and by intimidating workers attempting to unionize. In a marketing move to make inroads in the Latino community, the company invited Hilda Solis, Barack Obama's Secretary of Labor, as the keynote speaker. Solis emphasized her connection to Delores Huerta, who cofounded the United Farm Workers (UFW) with Chavez, and the reactionary Latino nationalist movement. But she somehow never once mentioned the word "union." Nor did she acknowledge her complicity with the Obama administration's record-breaking, racist deportations of more than two million undocumented workers, the overwhelming majority of them Latino and Filipino.

Pacifist Thugs

The rulers' admiration for Cesar Chavez shouldn't be surprising. Like his hero, Mahatma Gandhi, he subscribed to pacifism when it came to confronting the bosses. But in dealing with workers whom Chavez thought might undermine his power, the UFW routinely resorted to coercion and violence. The union actively collaborated in the expulsion of undocumented workers: "One of [Chavez's] strategies during the lettuce strike was causing deportations: he would alert the immigration authorities to the presence of undocumented workers and get them sent back to Mexico" ("The Madness of Cesar Chavez," The Atlantic, July 2011).

Epifanio Camacho, a farmworker and later a communist who joined and developed as a leader of Progressive Labor Party, was one of the early leaders of the group that became the UFW. Many undocumented workers, Camacho said, had "hope of finding protection in the union in exchange for their participation in the long struggle." But from early on, these workers were barred from union membership. They were confronted with a huge sign over the hiring hall that read, "No workers without legal residence papers in the United States may work where there are (UFW) contracts."

But that was just the beginning, Camacho said, of a ferocious campaign that Chavez waged against undocumented workers. The union established an "Illegals Campaign, a central piece of strategy which saw the UFW direct members to report the presence of undocumented immigrants in the fields and turn them in to the Immigration and Naturalization Service" (Latin Times, 3/28/2014). By 1973, Chavez had established a "wet line" near Yuma, Arizona. His cousin, the notoriously corrupt Manuel Chavez, directed three hundred UFW thugs in assisting federal agents and stopping anyone trying to cross the Mexican border into the U.S. without papers. Dozens of immigrants were brutally beaten. According to one ex-UFW organizer, three men from Queretaro got caught by Manuel's vigilantes and were never seen again (Village Voice, 8/21/84).

Chavez, Bosses' Agent

Throughout the movie there were shouts of "Huelga!" (Strike!). But like the UFW itself, the film diverts its attention from class struggle and picket lines in the fields — at the point of production, where workers' real power lies — to mostly futile boycotts that relied on the support of Chavez's liberal capitalist patrons. It highlights Chavez's trip to France to boycott a wine producer, showing scenes of frustrated bosses. This builds the capitalist illusion that one lonely, exceptional man can shepherd the masses and change their lives.

Michael Pena, the actor who portrays Chavez, persuasively conveys the supposed saint-like figure — especially during his famed hunger strike. Still, one young healthcare worker said that Chavez "really didn't know what the workers were going through on the picket line because he wasn't a worker," and that "his hunger strike was selfish and all about him." While Chavez worked in the fields as a teen, as a young man he was groomed to become an "organizer" by the anti-communist Saul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation. Alinsky had a long history of channeling workers' anger into electoral politics and pulling them away from challenging capitalism. (He also mentored Barack and Michelle Obama.)

The movie culminates with Chavez and the bosses shaking hands as the workers won the right to collectively organize and formed the UFW. Shortly thereafter, Chavez dedicated himself and his Latino following to Robert Kennedy's 1968 presidential campaign. Liberal unions and many community-based organization still use the same tactics to mislead workers and build class collaboration with the capitalist rulers, a hallmark of fascism. Chavez's legend was cemented by a two-part 1969 profile in *The New Yorker*, and later a full-scale biography, by Peter Matthiessen, who'd been recruited into the Central Intelligence Agency by a professor at Yale.

Fighting Fear and Cynicism

Most of my co-workers seemed to like the movie overall, and in particular the way it showed the growers' racism. In the early scenes, as "strike" and "union" blared across the screen, many snickered because they knew I was trying to unionize healthcare providers and that our company was actively trying to halt the process by disciplining me and other providers. They recognized the company's hypocrisy right away. There was one decent scene in the movie that described the farmworkers' fear of losing their jobs and how they overcame it. Many healthcare workers share the same fear and have been reluctant to join the unionizing struggle here.

While the young worker said, "I'm not scared and I'm down to try and fight back," she acknowledged the fear of others. She has read CHALLENGE and helped me with this article. Another young worker said he was reluctant to join our union campaign — not out of fear, but because he thought the UFW was an example of how unions in general have sold out to the bosses. While I agreed with him, I also tried to make the point that a union struggle could expose these contradictions and offered a different solution: the PLP and the fight for communism.

Both of these workers have been invited to our annual May Day Dinner. Although worker cynicism and misleaders abound, what we do matters, especially in the bosses' unions, their community organizations, and on the job. We must use mass organizations to build the Party and turn cynicism into class-consciousness. In this difficult period, growing the Party by ones and twos will make all the difference down the road to revolution.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Al Sharpton a lying stoolpigeon

amNewYork, 4/15 — Al Sharpton didn't work as an informant just for the FBI in the 1980s. He also provided information for the Brooklyn District Attorney and the U.S. attorney….

…The website The Smoking Gun [reported he informed] on black elected officials of the era, including Brooklyn Assemblyman Al Vann, Bronx Councilman Wendell Foster and Brooklyn Rep. Major Owens….

And Sharpton did not become a government informant because his life had been threatened, as he said…. [but] because the FBI had a tape that implicated him in a cocaine deal.

These facts, reported by New York Newsday in 1998,….[said] Sharpton cooperated after being videotaped discussing a drug deal with [an] undercover FBI agent…who was posing as a rich South American trying to break into boxing promotion.

"The reason he [Sharpton] was not indicted for criminal activity was that he did cooperate with the bureau…" Newsday reported….

Newsday also reported that Sharpton aided in an investigation by Andrew Maloney, then the U.S. attorney in Brooklyn….

Sharpton agreed, sources said, to gather information on Foster and [Sonny] Carson. At the time, Foster said of Sharpton: "It's not just a little lie, it's the biggest lie of his life…"

Huge bank decides cheating pays

NYT, 3/10 — Bank of America has been ordered to pay roughly $772 million in refunds to customers….The bank used deceptive marketing and billing practices….

…The Bank of America "illegally charged" its customers for credit monitoring and credit reporting services that were not received….

The bank was ordered to give refunds to more than a million customers….

Some of the misleading practices…included the bank's telemarketers telling customers that the first 30 days…were free, when, in fact, customers were charged.

Big companies steal workers' ideas

NYT, 4/14 — The big story in Silicon Valley these days is a class-action lawsuit alleging that several major tech companies, including Google and Apple, agreed not to try to hire away one another's employees — thereby hindering workers from seeking out better-paying jobs.

But do-not-hire agreements are not the only way that corporations are taking control of their employees' intellectual capital. From Thomas Edison to Steve Jobs, the individual inventor is a hero in our popular imagination. But increasingly it is corporations, not people, who own inventions.

This ownership runs deeper than inventions and artistic works, extending to skills, ideas and professional ties — tacit knowledge and social relations that cannot be subject to patent or copyright under the traditional scope of intellectual property, but which corporations lay claim to at increasing rates through employment agreements.

In these agreements, companies demand that employees, from those in low-level manufacturing positions to design engineers and creative workers sign away all their innovations….

While some states place limits on such agreements in their labor codes, for the most part, employers can demand ownership over almost all aspects of our cognitive ability….

Low pay brings low pensions

NYT, 4/6 — Raising the minimum wage has justifiably captured policy-makers' attention…but if the goal is to materially raise living standards for every American worker, we should also be calling for a minimum pension….

…Every worker would also have his or her Individual Retirement Account, the way many white-collar workers do now….

The biggest winners would be minorities who have high labor participation rates but lag far behind whites in retirement savings….

Brecht forum rallied workers

NYT, 4/14 — For nearly 40 years, the Brecht Forum has held classes, lectures, symposiums, musical performances and art exhibitions examining the role of the political left in American society.

But in a twist of irony, the institution, long a center of skepticism against capitalism, is closing, apparently felled by market forces….

Many of those familiar with the center wondered how the various political movements that used it as an incubator of ideas would fare with one fewer spot to gather….

Brecht provided an atmosphere that encouraged debate and dialogue and an exchange of ideas….

"There we were, talking about the need to maintain counter-institutions of the left," [CUNY professor Benjamin Shepard] said. And meanwhile the counter-institution we were sitting in was crumbling around us…."

The center's mission, according to its website, is to "create within existing society a…culture if working people are…capable of challenging the capitalist agenda."

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

Cultural Revolution: Collectivity Uplifts the Individual

Part I of this first-hand account of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR, 1966-1976) covered the origins of a village metal shop that made products to improve conditions for fishermen, tractor drivers, and textile workers. It also opened the story of an industrial breakthrough by a collective led by a worker with little formal education.

This memoir shows the need for further advances in the international revolutionary movement. Wages and profits must be eliminated, along with the special oppression of women. Above all, we must create a worker-run society based on one unwavering principle: From each according to commitment, to each according to need.

The defeat of the GPCR and the reversal of the Chinese revolution signaled the end of the old communist movement. These setbacks plunged the international working class into the Dark Night we have struggled through for more than two generations.

But Dark Night will have its end. World War I gave rise to the Bolshevik Revolution. World War II gave birth to the Chinese Revolution. The Progressive Labor Party, organizing across all borders, plans to make the next imperialist war the last one, with worldwide communist revolution.

In the summer of 1973, shortly after graduating from high school, I was one of fourteen young people hired temporarily for the contract for the two huge ventilation blowers. Based on Wang Xuejin's innovative idea, our first job was to make an underground blacksmith furnace. Then we made a frame to hold a big ring of thick sheet metal, with a horizontal bar over the top. By pushing the bar, we could turn the ring around.

Opposite the furnace, Wang made a huge cast-iron mold with just the right curve. After heating part of the ring, we turned the horizontal bar to move the metal plate being shaped back and forth to the mold. Two workers struck the heated metal with large wooden hammers. Then we repeated the process. Along with Wang and two other senior technicians, the young temporary workers worked in three shifts, around the clock. We were able to complete the two horn-shaped parts in a matter of weeks.

When the technicians from Qingdao came back to gauge our progress, they were shocked to see what we had accomplished. They said that Wang's idea was brilliant and Wang was a genius.

For two months the seventeen of us worked continuously on the two blowers, and eventually finished them ahead of schedule. Working with Wang and others, I learned a lot in that time. Upon finishing the job, I joined the other temporary workers to return to work in the fields. But one month later, I was rehired as a permanent worker. The factory leaders wanted me to learn how to operate one of the new lathes the factory had assembled.

The usual training time for a lathe operator was three months. But after one week, I was able to run it on my own. My teacher, Guan Xuming, the leader of the lathe unit, was pleased with my progress and commended me to Zhao Licheng, the village party leader in charge of industrial operations.

I was on the job for two months when one of my coworkers collapsed and was rushed to the hospital. Zhao Youshou was in his forties, and the doctors determined that he needed a blood transfusion for an operation on his stomach. It was a busy time, and most people in the village were out harvesting the fall crops and planting the winter wheat.

I went to the hospital with twenty others to donate blood. As it turned out, I was the only one with a matching blood type for Zhao. The doctor took 750 cc's of blood from me for the operation — I felt dizzy, and my friends had to wheel me home. But I was very happy that Zhao's life was saved.

A Factory Education

I stayed home for one week. When I returned to work, I was transferred from the lathe to assembling the transmission boxes for the fishing boats. I had a lot to learn. The most essential parts were various gears. To resist wearing, the surface of the gears needed to be as hard as possible, but not to the point they would break too easily. I checked out several books from the local library about gear manufacture in other countries, including the U.S., Germany, and Japan. I experimented with different heating methods and coolants, tested the results, and after discussions with many colleagues settled upon the best methods for making the gears.

In my first month on the job, we made seven transmission boxes. In the second month, the five of us made 14 units; in the third month, 21 units; in the fourth month, 28 — one unit a day. The entire factory watched our progress with excitement. We tested the units in the yard day and night before delivering them to the government. The job was on my mind all the time. I even found a solution to one technical problem while I was dreaming!

Our team earned a lot of profit for the factory that year; we created value calculated at 13 cents per work point. Each worker in our village made 1.3 yuan a day, comparable to the earnings of urban industrial workers. We also got grain, vegetables, fruits, and cooking oils from the collective at a much lower price. Everybody in the village was happy.

Each year the village chose model workers, including one person designated as standard-bearer. Wang Xuejin was one of those who'd previously received this special honor. This year I was chosen.

It was also the time to elect the next year's factory leadership team. I was only 19 years old, but the village Party committee asked me to be a candidate for factory manager. I was elected. The former manager, Guan Dunyan, was transferred to lead a group of welders in assembling overhead steel cranes in Qingdao.



A Step Toward Collectivity

My new position was challenging, but the Party committee and many workers in the factory encouraged and helped me. My job was made easier by the factory's distribution system. Manager or not, everybody working in the factory earned a set amount of work points. It was a time rate — men generally got ten points a day, women eight points a day, children five points. Individuals' daily point rates could be adjusted at the annual team meetings, but never more than plus or minus 20 percent of the basic rate.

A productive year in the factory would raise the value of our work points and be reflected in the end-of-year distribution. Everybody worked to advance the collective benefit rather than individual interests.

As the manager of a factory with 173 workers, I went to work earlier than everybody else and usually came back home later. I had to make sure all the equipment was functioning in the factory and that every worker was assigned the right job and had the appropriate tools. Whenever there was a problem in any unit, the leaders came to me.

During the decade of the Cultural Revolution, there were more than ten thousand high school graduates in the commune who were eligible to take the college entrance examination. When the news reached my village that I had passed, many of my friends were excited for me. In fact, I was torn.

Fu Xisan, an old colleague of mine from the factory advised me not to go. It was more exciting to be a factory manager than a teacher, he said. He added that his third daughter, who'd worked with me on the transmission boxes, was in love with me. I'd been secretly admiring her as well. If I stayed in the village, Fu said, he would allow his daughter to marry me. But if I went to college, everything was off.

On March 8, 1978, I left the village to study English at Qufu Teachers College.

In Part III, the author returns to his village and sees the dramatic repercussions of the reversal of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution.✪